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THE
Bharata Dharma

Magazine of Liberal Hinduism

Honorary Editors : { Rao Saheb C. V. Krishnaswami Ayyar.
{ Rao Bahadur K. V. Sesha Ayyangar, M.A., B.L.

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MAY, 1933

[NO. 2



On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar :

चित्रे वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Ah! The wonder under the Banyan tree! There sits the Teacher a youth; the disciples, elders. The teaching is silence, and the disciples' doubts are dispelled.

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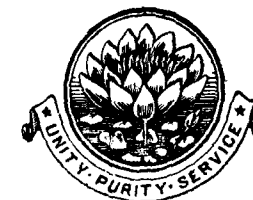
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SOME APPRECIATIONS

MR. JINARAJADASA FOR DR. BESANT AND HIMSELF.—The attempt of the Bharata Dharma is most necessary if Hinduism is to survive as an effective force in the reorganisation of India to-day....Not only her (Dr. Besant's) sympathy but her enthusiasm is exactly with such a work as is being attempted by the Bharata Dharma.

SIR. P. S. SIVASWAMI AIYAR.—The Bharata Dharma has offered a platform for the discussion of our religious and social problem from the standpoint of modernised faith responsive to the requirements of intellectual progress and rapidly changing social and economic conditions. The articles in the journal have been thoughtful, broadminded and inspiring.

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VENKATASUBBA RAO.—The ideal of the Bharata Dharma is a lofty one that of enabling the readers to approach the problem of life in a spirit of reason....There is greater need in India to-day than ever to examine old customs and old conceptions and to discard courageously such as are bound to be unsuitable. The Bharata Dharma offers to its readers helpful suggestions in this direction.



THE

Bharata Dharma

N.B.—The Arya Mata Sabha is not responsible for any opinions expressed or statements published in this magazine unless they are contained in an official document.

VOL. XI

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THE IDEAL MAN. SRI THYAGARAJA SWAMI'S KEERTANAS.

BY

C. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR—ABINAVA TYAGA BRAHMAM.

Readers of Bharata Dharma need hardly be told of the exquisite melody and the supreme spiritual intent of Thyagayya's Keertans. Keerthanacharya Brahma Sri C. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, than whom there is no abler exponent of those immortal songs today, has kindly agreed to contribute to those columns an exposition of at least one Keertan every month. We are sure that our readers will welcome it and will feel grateful to the Keertanacharya. Ed.]

None of Saint Tyagaraja's countless contributions to the literature of devotion and service brings out his conception of an ideal man more prominently than one of his creations in the raga Kanada opening with "Sukhi Evaro." Rightly read and between the lines, it reveals the Swami in his deepest and truest aspect—as the ideal gnani and yogi, the perfect synthesis of religion, philosophy and science, the most harmonious combination of wisdom and conduct, the Sankhya and Karma yogas of the Geeta.

Pallavi: *Sukhi Evaro? Rama Nama.*

Anu Pallavi: *Sukhi Evaro? Sumukhi Evaro?*
Akhila Saramagu Tharaka Nama

Charana: *Satyamu, Thappaga, Sakala Lokulaku*
Bhrityudai Daiva Bhedamu Leka
Nityamaina Suswara Ganamuto
Nirantharamagu Thyagaraju Vinutha Nama.

The prose order runs thus. *Rama Nama Sukhi Evaro*. It is not given to me to know who might be that happy man that finds joy unbounded in reciting the holy names of Sri Rama and meditating upon their purport.

Sumukhi Evaro? It is not given me to know who is the person whose peace of mind and perfect bliss of heart is reflected in his features making them supremely lovely and radiant.

Akhila Saramagu Tharaka Nama Sukhi Evaro? I know not who the blessed one may be that finds bliss indescribable in the names and excellences of the Lord that enable the Jeevatma to cross over the waters of material existence safely and pleasantly. For it is the very life, the very pith and marrow the quintessence of all that was, that is, and that will be.

Satyamuthappaka: without swerving a hair-breadth from the Law of Truth (in thought, word and deed)

Sakala Lokulaku Bhritiyudai: The servant of the countless myriads of worlds and systems.

Daiva Bhedamu Leka: without any distinction of the Gods and deities that are at the centre of the countless cults in the world.

Nityamaina Suswara ganamuto. To the accompaniment of perfect and heart compelling music, and that day after day.

Nirantharamagu: without the slightest hitch or interval.

Thyagaraja Vinutha Nama Sukhi. He who finds delight in singing the names of Him who is the subject of the worship and praise of Thyagaraja.

I know not who that most fortunate person might be who ever finds delight in singing the names and the glories of Sri Rama. I know not that thrice blessed man whose serenity of heart and joy reflect themselves in his features making them bright and lovely. I know not who is the chosen one that finds bliss unspeakable in the names of the Lord, that, leads the soul over the frightful waters of life and death, joy and sorrow, and forms the very heart of everything in the worlds above and below. I would like to know who the Great One is, whose feet never swerve from the path of Truth, (in thought, word and deed, who is the friend not only of all humanity, but of the entire creation through the countless worlds and systems. He feels no distinction of the Gods and the deities that are at the centre of the numerous warring cults in the world). He never has enough nor tires of reciting and meditating upon the holy names of the Lord to the accompaniment of sweet and perfect music and that day after day without the slightest interval, waking or sleeping. And

that priceless gift is given to me, this Thyagaraja, to enshrine Sri Rama in my heart and voice his greatness and glory for all time.

This Keertana is very aphoristic and cryptic and is pregnant with many a secret of divine wisdom of which I shall place before my readers such as have been given me to know.

(To be continued)

"Now that the fast will begin within two hours of writing this, I invite all friends and well-wishers to pray for strength for enabling me to go through the ordeal without weakening. I confess I have no strength except what God may give me. That he has never failed me hitherto gives me the confidence that He will not fail me now".

"The fast is intended to remove bitterness, to purify the hearts, and to make it clear that the movement is wholly moral to be prosecuted by wholly moral persons. May God bless the ordeal and fulfil its purpose!"

"From childhood Ramnam has been my talisman".

GANDHIJI.

The following is a translation of Gandhiji's favourite Vaishnava hymn:—

"He is the true Vaishnava who knows and feels another's woes as his own.

"Ever ready to serve, he never boasts. He bows to every one and despises no one, keeping his thought word and deed pure.

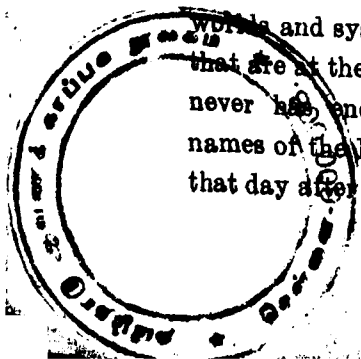
"Blessed is the mother of such a one.

"He reverences every woman as his mother.

"He keeps an equal mind and does not stain his lips with falsehood, nor does he touch another's wealth.

"No bonds of attachment can hold him. Ever in tune with Ramana, his body possesses in itself all places of pilgrimage.

"Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger, this is the true Vaishnava."



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THE ASSESSMENT OF VALUES IN LIFE

T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI, C.I.E.

Historians, whatever the matter of their history, have to execute two tasks. They have to ascertain and narrate facts. They have to estimate the value and significance of the facts they ascertain. The ascertainment of facts is a comparatively easy task. It is a matter of evidence. The evidence bearing on the question whether an alleged fact is true or whether an event took place is limited. When all the evidence is available, the matter is capable of ascertainment. An alleged fact may be unascertained or may even be unascertainable, because no evidence is available or only insufficient evidence. Or it may have been ascertained on what turns out to be insufficient or untrue evidence. A fact theretofore unknown may emerge disturbing established ideas. For example, the Black Hole of Calcutta, long believed to be true, had doubt thrown upon it and historians had to re-examine it. But generally speaking facts are capable of ascertainment finally because the evidence bearing on them must in every case be limited.

When we turn to the other task of the historian, the estimation of the value and significance of the ascertained facts, we shall find it more difficult. To estimate the value and significance of a fact is to judge of its consequences. Now consequences are an endless series. The deeper and more significant the fact, the more spread out in time and more complicated are the consequences and the more difficult to be sure of the correctness of conclusions in regard to them. As the consequences are an endless series, a historian has to consider not only the consequences that have already arisen and are a matter of past history but also the consequences that might arise in the future and are therefore at present only a matter for more or less valid and approximate inferences and conjectures. There is an actual and a potential body of material on which his valuation is based. The actual is that which has happened and is in operation; the potential is merely what would in time happen and come into operation. Historians between whom there are centuries have different actual materials for judgment. What was potential in the case of the earlier historian and a matter for guess is in part actual material for the later. And it must also be remembered that the future consequences of a fact are not determined solely with reference to it alone but also with reference to other facts which may disturb or even reverse its consequences. This part of a historian's task is progressive. It is not finally ascertained. In every generation the new historian will be in a better

position to judge. Or the historian of 1800, if he were writing in 1900 would or might write his history differently. His judgments might very well be wholly different. In the process of time, with the unfolding of consequences, verdicts may have to be revised. There is then the progressiveness of history and the need to revalue facts in the light of the ever accumulating material helping in the study of their consequences.

For an illustration, a medicine or a food or drink may in the short run produce a sense of good achieved. Further experience may show its baneful consequences. The first judgment and the last are both based on a study of consequences. The emergence of further consequences demands a revision of the first judgment.

So may it be with an institution which history seeks to evaluate. The final judgment may well be that given certain conditions and up to a certain point of time it will produce good but directly the conditions cease to be or after a certain point of time it must produce harm.

The need for periodical re-examination and correction of values requires to be recognised.

* * * * *

To turn to a connected topic, Life and its processes with which history is concerned is big and vast. Man sees but limited parts and aspects of it at any time. Unconsciously but inevitably, if not systematically like the historian, man evaluates and draws lessons. He frames for himself rules of life. The framing of these rules is a mode of integrating his experience. The collective experience of the Society is similarly integrated in the Books of the Society and built into social life. It is impossible that men should be solving each problem by a re-examination of all previous experiences or all similar situations in the past. The ready-made rules supply the solutions. But it is necessary to recognise that these are just compendious statements for use. They are not of universal validity under all conditions and in all times and places. They may require to be adapted and altered to suit circumstances beyond their contemplation. Life is too vast to be limited by rules framed by persons however wise and intelligent they may have been in their day. It is hardly fair to the wise men who have laboured to give us guidance to make them responsible for the consequences of our application of their rules as if they were for all times and circumstances.

Ample warnings have they given us of the need for change with the times and vast changes have they made themselves.

A close observer will notice that, notwithstanding the clinging to formulæ, individuals and slowly the society as a whole change from day to day imperceptibly. The rules of 1933 are not those of 1900. Even the short span of a generation makes and has made momentous changes.

* * * * *

When momentous questions arise mere formulæ will not suffice to settle them. There is no use appealing to them as to a final arbiter of things. In the more exact sciences formulæ are being shifted with advancing knowledge. Life and its demands can only be met by accommodations that cannot be brought within the four corners of an unvarying formula.

How is the question to be solved? Opinions vary and are held with equal tenacity and conviction. They so vary sometimes that each party doubts the honesty of the other. If struggle for life and survival of the fittest is the law of biological species, if it is the rule among men and among communities that meet in conflict, it equally applies in the realm of ideas. If we could only see them we should see them wrangling wrestling and warring with each other—trying to exterminate their opponents and to survive themselves. I am reminded of the early conception of the Gods fighting on the side of their men. When Greek and Trojan meet, their Gods are also in the fray. There is something intrinsically real—more real than most people recognise—in the belief that when two people meet and contend for mastery, there is much more involved than mere physical conflict; there is in a variety of ways an attempt to conquer and subjugate, each the other. Well may one say that not men alone but their Gods, the ideals for which these stand, are in conflict. While the process may and often does involve the saturation of each with the other's ideas, one or the other does succumb finally.

To come back to the context the only mode of solving a problem which appeals in different ways to different people is to make the ideas get into the hearts of people.

* * * * *

The application of these ideas to our present day problems is obvious and need not be explicitly propounded. Our problems need thinking out again. They cannot be solved by ancient prescriptions and wrangles over their interpretation. Steady patient work is necessary. Impatience takes us nowhere!

HARIJAN UPLIFT*.

To be entrusted with the opening function of such a conference as this is not only an honour, it is a call to service which overrides many an excuse for inaction. It gives one, besides, an opportunity for expressing one's personal sympathy, as well as the sympathy of the vast body of enlightened public opinion, in the efforts that are being made for the amelioration of a large and important section of our fellowmen, and in their own self-exertions to rise above the depressing influences of the past.

My part in the day's proceedings is a formal one. I am absolved from the task of attempting either a comprehensive survey of the position of the Depressed Classes, or a detailed discussion of policies and measures, or the adumbration of plans of future action. All this properly falls to those who will speak during the regular session. I shall content myself with touching, in a very cursory way, on one or two general aspects of the situation.

I may say at once that I am entirely in agreement with those who hold that untouchability as practised in our land is an utterly absurd custom for which there is no spiritual or rational warrant or foundation. It is, to put it shortly, a sin against religion and a crime against humanity. Whatever its origin or even hypothetical primeval justification, its further tolerance at the present day is fraught with danger not only to Hinduism as a religious system, but to the solidarity of Hindu society and its ultimate welfare and progress. Congenital untouchability and the bewildering ramifications of the caste system form to-day the one serious impediment in the way of the Hindu community exerting its full and proper weight in the policy of the nation, and the principal obstacle to the achievement of Indian unity and complete self-determination.

Two causes above all have contributed to keep down twenty per cent of India's population in a state of degradation and virtual bondage. One of them is external compulsion in the shape of persecution and harassment, actual or threatened; the other is an inner attitude, deeply ingrained, of congenital pollution and debasement.

Thanks to the zealous efforts of selfless friends of the Depressed Classes and the growing solicitude of Governments for their secular welfare, as well as to their own gradual awakening to realities, the first of these causes of enslavement has been largely eliminated, except in

* Opening speech by Rajadharma Pravina Diwan Bahadur K. S. Chandrasekhara Aiyar at the Bangalore Adikarnataka Conference, April 1933.

some backward and outlying parts of the country, and its complete disappearance is but a matter of years.

The Depressed Classes are already in the eye of the law equal to all other communities. Their right of access to the temples of justice, to courts and offices, to high roads, dispensaries and other places open to the public has been generally recognized. Public schools have been thrown open to their children. Special facilities are being given them in many Provinces and States, in the matter of school fees and scholarships, land for cultivation and building sites, and provision of drinking water. It is true that the facilities given are not always adequate, and that much remains to be done before those who are now in the category of depressed can be raised to the level of the other sections of the community. What I am pointing out is that it is no longer possible for Caste Hindus, even if they wanted it, to exercise the traditional forms of tyranny over the so-called Untouchables.

The coping stone to the various steps of enfranchisement already taken or being taken is furnished in the generous measure of political representation which the Depressed Classes will receive under the agreed settlement substituted by the dramatic intervention of Mahatma Gandhi in place of the award of the British Government. In addition to special representation in the provincial legislatures, they will have their right of general representation within, and as part of, the Hindu community; and here the weight of numbers will undoubtedly count for much. Already they have produced spokesmen and leaders of their own, who are in no way inferior in character, intelligence or practical ability to those of other communities. It is certain that the future holds every promise of steady progress for the classes now known as Depressed.

The other and even more persistent cause of depression is a matter of inner psychology. Despite futile arguments usually based on antiquated or distorted texts, *congenital* untouchability is nothing but a fiction; it does not represent any real fact in nature. Caste Hindus however have for purposes of their own rubbed the idea of it into the minds of millions of the ignorant and helpless, reinforcing the impression by material and social penalties; and the victims of the oft repeated mental "suggestion" have acquired the corresponding mentality. If people generally at the present day will cease to harp on the idea of certain classes being untouchable by nature, if those classes are helped to live on a plane of life not below that of the other Hindu communities, and encouraged to stand firmly on their common rights and privileges, in the same way as

communities outside the Hindu fold, such as Indian Christians, Moslems, and Parsis, the whole unreal and vicious mentality of untouchability will disappear like the morning mist before the rising sun.

It is true that a change of heart on the part of Caste Hindus is needed; but a changed orientation on the part of the Depressed Classes is also indispensable. It is in that way that a new self-respect will be born which will regenerate and uplift those who are now lowly and depressed.

The question of temple entry has come very much to the front during these last few months, as the result chiefly of the stirring call of Mahatma Gandhi from within his prison walls and the whirlwind campaign of propaganda that has been set on foot in consequence.

The question is a large and important one into which I cannot now go at length. But speaking for myself, and I think for the generality of educated and progressive Hindus, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that community of worship is the only desirable objective, the one ideal goal, for which all men of light and leading must continuously strive. For those who believe in One Supreme Deity, the father of all, in whose eyes all His children are equal, and to whose all-embracing heart all, high and low, ignorant and intelligent, have a right of approach in prayer and adoration, the idea of preference and exclusion is irrational and offensive. As a matter of fact, many sensible broad-minded people are already acting on the principle of the utility and importance of common worship, as for instance in the Theosophical Society and in the Bharata Samaja.

That the consecration of images in temples, when done effectively and by competent agency, helps to create centres of spiritual power and influence is probably true. But the resulting benefit must be shared by the people at large, and not monopolised by the orthodox few. In any case, if the original power and influence are to be maintained and intensified, it must be through the devotion and purity of life and mind of the worshippers as well as through the outer purity of surroundings. Of how many temples at the present day can this be said with any confidence, seeing how rampant even within their precincts are hypocrisy and superstition, greed and uncharitableness, physical uncleanness and squalor? *The presence and prayers of pious, unsophisticated, humble-minded people, even if they be Panchamas by birth, will tend to keep up, but cannot possibly vitiate, the spiritual atmosphere and surroundings of a truly sacred place.*¹

1. The italics are ours.

It does not, however, follow because community of worship is the right thing to aim at on principle, that it would in practice be feasible or expedient to enforce straight away a universal right of entry into all temples as being a logical consequence of the extinction of untouchability. The consolidated prejudice of ages has to be taken into account, and can only be broken down gradually. It may be questioned whether it would be in the interests of the Depressed Classes themselves to insist at the moment on a general right of temple entry, in the face of powerful opposition and at the risk of perpetuating mutual ill-feeling and religious faction within the great Hindu community. But a beginning may well be made in the case of temples owned and managed by the State, at any rate in the absence of proof (which can rarely be forthcoming) that a particular caste or sect has acquired by grant or immemorial usage a definite right of exclusive worship. As a matter of fact, action in such a direction has already been taken in Baroda where State temples have been thrown open generally to all classes of Hindus. This courageous example may well be followed in Mysore and in British India. A gesture of this kind will serve to show that the Government of the land is completely dissociated from the narrow and sectarian spirit of religious exclusion; and the good influence is bound to spread to privately managed institutions and to react in various other directions as well.

On the whole, I venture to think that there is sound practical wisdom in the observation of His Excellency the Viceroy in his reply to a recent deputation, that more will probably be secured by the methods of persuasion and agreement than by endeavouring to force through a measure of legislative compulsion in the face of strong and sincere opposition. It is a matter for gratification that the leaders of the Harijans have, as a rule, kept aloof from the controversies and agitations now raging, leaving the initiative to their caste Hindu well-wishers.

—
'Our vested rights rest on a basis of immemorial wrongs'

THE TOYS.

My little son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,

I struck him, and dismiss'd

With hard words and unkiss'd

—His mother who was patient, being dead
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,

I visited his bed.

But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.

And I with moan,

Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,

He had put, within his reach,

A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,

A piece of glass abraded by the beach,

And six or seven shells,

A bottle with bluebells,

And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

So when that night I pray'd

To God, I wept, and said:

Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,

Not vexing thee in death,

And Thou rememberest of what toys

We made our joys,

How weekly understood

Thy great commanded good,

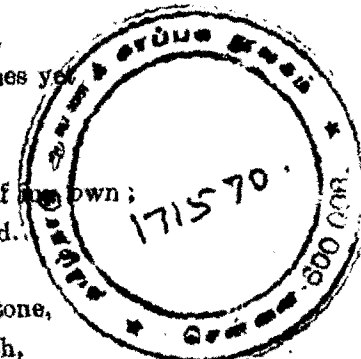
Then, fatherly not less

Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,

Thou'lt leave Thy wreath, and say.

'I will be sorry for their childishness.'

C. PATMORE.



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A RECORD OF SOCIAL WORK.

[Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the entry of Harijans into Hindu temples, few even among the orthodox Hindus can have any reasonable objection to their economic and social regeneration. The presence of so prominent an opponent of temple entry like Brahmasri T. M. Krishnaswami Ayyar, Advocate, Madras, at a recent anniversary meeting of a Harijan Colony at Madras and his active participation in its proceedings is a very hopeful sign, in spite of a recent declaration of an ex-judge of the Travancore High Court that untouchability is so integral a part of Hinduism that it would wither if that is touched. Though there is plenty of good will in favour of Harijans uplift, there are several who are not quite sure as to how to proceed to achieve it. In such matters an ounce of practice is better than a ton of theory and the following extracts from the report of the excellent work done by Mr. Sankaranarayana Ayyar and sister Visalakshi in Madras would be of great help and interest to other workers like them in Madras and elsewhere as to how such work is being and can be done. So we are glad to publish them. Help to such endeavours is indeed true worship Ed.]

INTRODUCTORY :—In April 1932, a colony of fishermen of about 90 families and about 6 families of Adidraidas in Palayasudukadu, opposite to Lady Willingdon Training College, were threatened with eviction. Work was then undertaken among them; the eviction proceedings were postponed. The Adidraidas there and in Thulukkanam Tope Cheri, who were also threatened with eviction by the landlord, have both been now formed into a House Building Co-operative Society and housed in a site of about 19½ grounds purchased from the Bishop of Madras. This colony named Krishnampet Gokulam, is situate on the South side of Lloyd's Road a few yards East of the Barbers Bridge Tramroad cutting.

WORKERS :—At first members of the League of Youth, and college students were co-operating in the work. The aim, at start, was to rouse interest, and train college students and youths, in the social ameliorative work among their poor illiterate brethren, so that the spirit of Yagna or Self-losing Service, may be placed as the practical objective of education and life. The effort received response for two years; but the strain of the College courses and latterly the distraction of the political upheaval, have shut off all hopes of success in this aim. Another aim was to

¹ Extracts from the Annual Report of Slum Work done under the auspices of the Madras Sanitary Welfare League.

rouse leaders and workers among the people themselves; the work has been more successful in this aim.

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF THE WORK :—The aim of the work is to dispel the slum mentality and to awaken in the people a sense of cleanliness of person and premises, purity and responsibility in life and dealings. Temperance ripening to the avoiding of all drink, thrift, co-operation for common welfare, and literacy are the successive steps of evolution aimed at. Education given is by talks and tracts, and aims more at rousing self-effort on the above lines than at literacy. Self-help, and co-operation for common weal are roused at each step. The literate are trained to teach the illiterate, by talks, stories, and lessons at informal night gatherings. The pressing social evils and the ways of remedying them are discussed with the people in their caste gatherings; and the results of the talk are embodied in tracts, written and cyclostyled. These are distributed to the literate, to be read out to and discussed again, and carried out in practice. Education is thus given the one object of teaching life's problems of the individual and society. Fundamental lines of social work are embodied in two songs which are sung with other devotional songs in weekly Bhajanas, and at the weekly gatherings. Carefully conducted weekly Bhajana parties taken round the whole place are found very effective in bringing about a weekly cleaning up of the whole place and giving a religious and moral tone to all the people. It is found that the most effective way of teaching and winning love is to make use of the instinctive love for song that is found in almost all slum people. Occasionally public meetings are held to which gentlemen and ladies are invited, and prizes in the shape of clothes; toilette requisites, and books are given to those slum residents who respond most and also help as workers to spread the work.

Effects: (a) **DRINK IS LESSENING** :—The youth in all places, have given up drink. The elders in the cheri colony have also given it up; they are giving it up in the fishermen colony. In Odderpalayam, the effect cannot be said to be satisfactory among elders. But in all places, a general social opinion against drink is steadily growing up, which it is hoped will soon get rid of the evil. Social customs, in which drink and other wastes form the greater part of the expenditure, are being reformed by cutting off drink and the waste.

(d) **HEALTH AND SANITATION** :—Of the three areas, the Oddars are the most prone to diseases. This is due to their eating unclean pork, and

to their deep drink habit, and its consequent train of evils. The Adidravidas were unhealthy in their old huts, owing to want of space and unhealthy surroundings; since their removal to the new colony, their health has perceptibly improved. The fishermen, generally, keep good health; they work hard, and are ever on the sea and in the open air, and their food is fairly fresh.

In the two latter colonies, arrangements are being made, with the help of friends in the medical profession, who have agreed to serve in an honorary capacity, to make a detailed health survey of the inhabitants from hut to hut, and resolve on the measures best suited to bring about ideal conditions.

(e) CLEANLINESS :—A love of personal cleanliness is also gradually percolating into the people. The women and young men and girls, in the Odda colony, all persons in the Cheri colony, and girls and youth in the fishermen colony are keeping their person, clothes, and premises clean as far as is possible with their scanty means or scantier water facilities. The cheri colony of Gokulam stands first in point of general cleanliness of person, premises, and village. This is due greatly to the careful planning of the colony, the alignment of streets, and the regulations controlling the construction of the huts. It is due in a much greater measure, to the new outlook of the people, which makes them aim strenuously at a life, better, cleaner, healthier, and more beautiful in all ways.

One great lesson we have learnt from our intensive Slum Improvement work is that work of the kind we have been doing should first be done among the slum folk, to remove their "slum mentality," and to make them thirst for a better life of civic responsibility and citizenship; and when this has been done, it should be followed up by provision of amenities like proper housing, alignment of the streets, street lighting, latrines, bathing places, educational facilities etc. Having, by our effort and the self-effort of the slum people, provided the first two for the cheri colony (Gokulam), we now mean applying to the Corporation to supply the other fundamental sanitary amenities. These amenities have long been overdue from the Corporation for Oddarpalayam, especially as it is essentially a colony of their own employees. We have been repeatedly pressing the Corporation to provide these; but with no result as yet. It is learnt, however, they intend to provide latrines and bathing places; but there is no talk yet of re-alignment of the streets and huts and provision of street lighting. In the interests of the sanitary welfare of the city, and in the interests of public economy, we would place before the Corpo-

ration our cheri colony scheme (of Gokulam), and the method by which it has been achieved, for scrutiny and acceptance in moulding their policy of Slum Improvement. Costly schemes of erecting houses, or plinths, without corresponding work to rouse and enlist the active co-operation and sharing of responsibility by the slum residents, appear to be an undue and useless burden on the general tax payer. It is understood that, in providing such amenities and other help to cheri people, the experience of the Labour Department of Government has been, that such amenities rarely profit the people or continue in proper condition, unless the people themselves value them, and take responsibility to see to their proper use and maintenance 'in proper condition.' It seems, therefore, economical and necessary to organise, or help organisations which render, real active social uplift work among the slum people with a view to remove their 'slum mentality.' The problem may be difficult in working; but, nevertheless, must be tackled.

(f) MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION has, from the first, been found to be the basis of all the reform work. People respond more readily, when it is suggested that they must make the village, home, person, and mind pure and beautiful like a garden, and invite God to dwell there as their friend and guide. By the natural instinct that is latent in all Indians, they grasp it with a readiness, vividness and reality, which is a pleasant surprise to the workers attuned to that line of work; and once the people grasp it, all the steps of further reform easily follow from their own hearts, if gently touched and roused now and then with sympathy and insight. The whole work, and the acts which have formulated the successive forward steps of progress, have had this holy background. It is found that the people grow more and more responsible to God in their hearts and around them; this is the surest way for the continuance of their self-help, self-reform, and progress, unaffected by external conditions. This back-ground of the work has stood us in good stead, during the troubled times of the political struggle of last year, and now during the turmoil of the temple-entry movement.

(h) COTTAGE INDUSTRIES: Attempts have been made to start embroidery and hand-stitching work, among Odda and Cheri women. They pick up the work with skill; but soon the work has to stop, since we are not able to market the goods and pay them a wage. The Women's Swadeshi League employed a few women for carding cotton for about a month, and then disbanded them. The Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home Workshop were kind enough to

train one of our cheri boys at weaving; and have offered to train another cheri boy at expert carpentry work. The South Indian Humanitarian League have been kind enough to finance us for making a loom and starting weaving and carpentry as cottage industries on a very modest scale. The loom has been made by our cheri carpenter under directions of the Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home workshop; and we shall soon set it working in our Gokulam. We hope gradually to make the old slum folk to spin yarn, and weave it. Specimens of different kinds of cloth woven by our cheri boys and of furniture made by our cheri carpenter were also exhibited at the exhibition attached to the Slum Welfare Conference recently organised by the Sociological Brotherhood, Triplicane.

The educated human of to-day has a mind which can be compared only to a store in which the very latest and most precious acquisitions are flung on a top of noisome heap of rag-and-bottle refuse and worthless antiquities from the museum lumber room. And as our current schooling and colleging and graduating consists in reproducing this mess in the minds of every fresh generation of children, we are provoking revolutionary emergencies in which persons muddled by university degrees will have to be politically disfranchised and disqualified as, in effect, certified lunatics, and the direction of affairs given over to the self-educated and the simpletons.

BERNARD SHAW.

GANDHIJI'S FAST.

K. V. SESA AYYANGAR.

Once again the nation has been called upon to face the sublime ordeal of a prolonged fast by Gandhiji. This time the fast is not for or against anybody in particular. Nor does it arise from any single cause. It is not a fasting 'unto death' either, as was the case on the former occasion. The fast is limited to a period of 21 days.

But this does not mean that the implications of the fast are less serious. On the contrary the fast cannot be broken within 21 days, a feature fraught with disastrous possibilities in the present state of his health. In its motive it is a fast of purification. Its main objective is the speedy achievement of Harijan emancipation. In its mechanism it is an induction of the forces making for social righteousness and the preparation of the public mind for their reception.

Incomprehensible as Gandhiji's resolution practically to throw away his life may seem to us, now that he has actually embarked upon it, we are in duty bound to make an effort to understand it. One possible explanation is that Gandhiji's fast is a Tapas* after the manner of the Great Rishis of Ancient India. In Hinduism Tapas is the means of achieving all desired objects. Many have been the instances where through Tapas men and Devas have attained their goal. Manu says 'All¹ joys in Heaven and Earth have their source in Tapas' and in the Mahabharata it is said, 'There is nothing in the three worlds which cannot be achieved through Tapas²'. Tapas is the means for realising even Brahman³. Tapas is Brahman itself. Indeed the act of creation itself was possible only through Tapas.⁴ Therefore to those who believe in Tapas and in the response of the Higher Powers to the appeal of human beings made through Tapas the inwardness of Gandhiji's fast may be less difficult of comprehension. What was possible in the past ought to be possible in the present. What was possible to those who sought for selfish objectives ought to be possible to one who seeks only the social gain. What was possible to those

¹ तपोमूलमिदं सर्वं देव मानुषकं सुखं । (Manu XI 234.)

² नाप्राप्यं तपसः किंचित्त्रैलोक्येऽपि (Santi-Parva Ch. 301.)

³ तपसा ब्रह्मविज्ञासस्व तपो ब्रह्मेति (Taittareeya).

⁴ सतपो तप्यत सतपस्तत्वा इदं सर्वमसृजत. (Taittareeya)

* The term appears to be more appropriate than 'Yajna' which implies strenuous action. Tapas itself may be a Yajna. (Gita Ch. VI.)

who strove in solitude without a single human friend to cheer them, ought to be possible to one over whom a whole nation watches with affection and with love. Unfortunately we have lost faith in Tapas. We doubt its success. We are afraid of failure. Like Arjuna we are tempted to think that Gandhiji's fast may be

'Like the vain cloud, which floats' twixt earth and heaven
When lightning splits it, and it vanisheth."¹

But with all our humble attempt to understand it, both thought and expression are hushed before the colossal grandeur of this unique spiritual phenomenon. Memory alone remains, memory of the legendary traditions of a mythic past when a single human soul became the vehicle of the expression of God's will and bent the whole universe to its purpose by its penance and sacrifice. Is it too much to believe that in Gandhiji's fast Hinduism is undergoing the travail of the birth of a new Dharma and that God himself is revealing unto his people that an old righteousness has been so out-grown as to become unrighteousness, and granting unto them the strength to emerge into a new era of social justice? Is it a matter of accidental co-incidence that Monday the 8th of May on which the fast began is the anniversary of the day when Vishnu revealed himself to his loving Bhakta Prahlada and came down as Narasimha Avatar to justify the assertion of his faithful servant that He is all-pervasive?²

One further duty also remains. That is prayer. To the extent to which we pray with Gandhiji during these fateful days, to that extent we shall be sharing in the merit of his Tapas. To the extent to which we pray for him, to that extent we shall be helping to preserve the channel through which new influences have been visibly flowing into this country all these years. To the extent to which we work for the cause which Gandhiji has near to his heart and for which he has commenced this penance to that extent we shall be making it easy for the Higher Powers to respond to his Tapas and vouchsafe to him the strength to carry through his great undertaking.

1. Bhagavad Gita Ch. VI. (Song celestial).

2. सत्यं विधातुं निजभृत्यभाषितं व्याप्तिं च भूतेष्वखिलेषु चाऽत्मनः ।

अदृश्यतात्यद्भुतरूपमुद्बुद्धं स्तंभेभ्योऽन्यथा मृगं न मानुषम् ॥ Bhagavata VII: 8-18.

REVIEW.

ISLAM—A STUDY BY ABDUL KARIM, B. A.

Adyar Pamphlets. No. 148. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

Mr. Abdul Karim of the Madras Forest Service is well-known as a Mohamadan of liberal views who is not the less attached to the great religion of his forefathers because he sees what is good in other faiths which are not his own. In the pamphlet before us he sets out what according to him, are the correct answers to questions such as "What is Islam?" "Who is a Muslim?" "What is the importance of the several Mohamadan institutions like the pilgrimage of the Haj, compulsory alms, modes and times for prayer?" and what Mohamadanism has to say on brotherhood, animal sacrifices, reincarnation, the great man; man's relations to animals; idolatry; war and peace and similar topics. It is not possible to set down what he says on them for that would be writing not a review but another pamphlet. This much we would say that though all Mohamadans may not and if one can judge from their writings and actions do not seem to agree with all that Mr. Abdul Karim says few can dispute that his opinions are well documented from the Koran. He shows clearly that there is no real basis for the intolerance of Hinduism so commonly associated in the Hindu mind with Mohamadans. As Mr. Abdul Karim rightly points out has not the great prophet of Islam said. "It did not beseem God to have destroyed towns for wrong belief while they were the doers of good." If only other members of Mr. Abdul Karim's faith had always taken and will in future take the same high view of Islam and Hinduism as he does, there would have been and would be very much less bloodshed in the name of religion than has been and one is afraid would be the case. The pamphlet which is written in excellent English contains in a short compass much that is valuable. We heartily commend it to all who care for "a sympathetic interpretation" of Islam with a view to bring out its underlying unity with other faiths and divest it of "encrustations and non-essentials."

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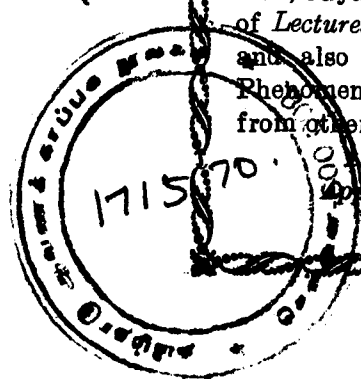
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